

Documents on Diplomacy: Lessons

I Do Declare!

- Standard: I. Culture
II. Time, Continuity, and Change
III. People, Places, and Environments
X. Civic Ideals and Practices
- Grade Level: 9–12 (*Note:* Generating and testing hypotheses, metacognition)
- Objectives: The student will:
- Complete an activity on classifying ideas about government
 - Finish a checklist comparing two different declarations of independence
 - Write an hypothesis statement about the Texas situation with Mexico
 - Prove or disprove their hypothesis statements after completing the activities of the class
 - Discuss with classmates how and why their thinking was applied to activities.
- Time: 1 class period
- Materials: Documents: **1845** *Texas Declaration of Independence*
1845 *Inaugural Address of James K. Polk*
- Exercises: *Government Overview*
Checklist of Important Ideas (make a transparency)
Generating a Hypothesis Worksheet (make a transparency)
- A copy of the U.S. Declaration of Independence (in most textbooks)
- Procedures:

Setting the Stage

The American Declaration of Independence can be divided into key parts: preamble, a new philosophy of government, grievances enumerated, the declaration itself, and the treasonous pledge at the end. The Texas Declaration of Independence includes some similar elements. It will be interesting for students to find those similarities and to decide if the "Texas question" was the result of deliberate planning—or the happenstance of history.

Two evaluation sheets have been created for the students to dig into these similarities for their own evaluation of Texas' quest to join the Union.

Students will be asked to create an historical hypothesis about the Texas situation and prove it one way or another using these documents. For more information on this technique, see *What Works in Schools* by Robert Marzano: "Generating Hypothesis" and "Metacognition."

Homework for day before

1. Ask students to generate a hypothesis about the Texans' demand for independence using the hypothesis sheet for homework and bring it to class the next day. Do a quick check of these hypotheses at the beginning of class on day one.

Procedures: Day One

(*Note:* Check to see that all have written their hypothesis statement.)

1. Distribute the documents: *The Texas Declaration of Independence* and *The Inaugural Address of James K. Polk* and U.S. Declaration of Independence (use textbook or internet copies.)

2. Also hand out the *Overview of Government* exercise and ask students to work with a partner to decide where these ideas should be classified. While they are working, draw a similar chart on the board or have a transparency made for the overhead ready for discussion.

3. Have the student pairs share their insights with the whole class on how they classified the ideas. The teacher should either record their findings on the white board or on the overhead transparency.

4. Students can add to their sheets if necessary, but should be able to explain why they put categorized specific ideas in various columns. (Allow about 20 minutes of discussion.)

5. Distribute the *Checklist of Important Ideas* and ask the same partners to place check marks in the columns beside the ideas that match.

6. Again, have a transparency ready for a discussion of how and why they placed check marks where they did. Students may make adjustments to their individual sheets.

7. For the last 20 minutes ask students to re-read their hypothesis sheets, review all their class work, and determine whether the hypothesis they created about Texan independence can be proven or disproven. Have them write their explanations on the sheet. Collect these sheets.

Extension Activity:

Cut out each rectangle of the collected hypothesis sheets and paste (or type) them onto one overall handout. Use the sheet as the basis for classroom debates about each hypothesis. Create a speakers' list on the board of who wants to speak TO, FOR or AGAINST the hypothesis. (Speaking TO a hypothesis does not take a side.) ■